

Utah Higher Education and Corrections Council



Meeting Minutes

Draft – pending approval

Tuesday, June 20, 2023, 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Utah System of Higher Education, 60 South 400 West, Salt Lake City UT, The Gateway, Office Tower 2, 5th Floor

Attendance:

- Council Members Present: Rep. Melissa Ballard (co-chair), Sen. Mike McKell (co-chair), Jared Haines, Daniel Powers, David Bokovoy, Christopher Hodson, *Carrie Cochran, Anndrea Parrish, Brian Fauver, Helen Hanson,
 - Council Members Excused: Roxanna Molina, Grace Acosta, Rich Christiansen
 - Non-Voting Representatives Present: *Michael Medley, *Mark Dockins, *Andy Eisen, Sheriff Chad Jensen, *Stephanie Patton
 - Non-Voting Representatives Excused: Andy Eisen
 - Others Present: *Tim Miller, *Marjorie Cortez, *Sam Arungwa, *Linda Donaldson, Anthony Nocella, Chris Bradbury, Russ Galt, *Ryan Hogan
- *indicates remote attendance via Zoom*

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order and new members were introduced. Due to statutory changes to the Board of Higher Education, this is the last meeting for Rich Christiansen and Grace Acosta. The governor needs to appoint a formerly incarcerated student member to replace Roxanna Molina, who will no longer be available to serve. The council was asked to submit names for candidates by the end of the week. All other reappointments or replacements for the terms of office beginning July 1st have either been completed or are in process.

2. Approval of Minutes – April 18, 2023

(Minutes were attached)

The council reviewed the minutes from the April 2023 meeting.

Motion by Representative Ballard to approve the minutes.

All present voted in favor.

3. Inmate Population Profile

Anndrea Parrish (Utah Department of Corrections) reviewed inmate population data. They are struggling to maintain accurate data with the OTrach system not always reliable. They are updating their 3-year review post-release measurements to align with other states on recidivism. With 11.6% of the inmate population participating in education at any given point in time, the education seats are filled and have reached capacity. The UDC is working to eliminate barriers and adding new programs and opportunities. Brian Fauver (UDC) indicated that SLCC and Davis Tech have expanded their programs and enrollments have doubled in the last year with potential to double again in the next year.

(Bokovoy) SLCC enrolled 226 students in fall of 2022, about 10% of the Salt Lake prison population, with 300 anticipated this fall. The current completion rates are 93% for women and 66% for men. Graduation will be July 10th.

(Parrish) There is a gap between the demand for education and the number of seats available. The prison is working on being deliberate when an inmate is moved so they are able to complete their education. Completion is considered receiving a certificate or completing a course in a semester. There are 31 degrees or certificates being awarded at the July graduation.

(Haines, Bokovoy, Hodson) Next steps – Create a plan for the education of incarcerated individuals, considering what higher education individuals are ready to receive and able to access. Tablets have had success with some uses in maximum security, giving hope to extend

education there. BYU teaches university level courses at the prison. SLCC currently offers six AA degrees. As a 2nd chance Pell institution, they cannot expand until they become certified as prison education program. Prison education is currently offered by USU, BYU, UU, Davis Tech, SLCC, Snow, Uintah Basin. UDC just met with USU to partner with the prison on the greenhouse project.

(Ballard) We need to: align articulation for cost, completion and workforce development needs where inmates are exiting; help them establish careers before they leave; have a case action plan and advisor for every inmate; give them resident status for tuition purposes; reduce or eliminate fees; help them apply for grants and scholarships; and stop requiring the 50% payment up front.

(Parrish) Only about 2% of inmates might qualify for to enroll in a bachelor or master's degree. Less than fifty percent have a high school diploma or equivalent. There are many non-native English speakers. UDC is working with the LDS church on getting a literacy program going. The other factors that go into eligibility include behavior, housing, and desire.

4. Recommendations for County Jails

The UDC Jail Book attached to the agenda summarizes the population and programs provided at the county jails.

Logan County Sheriff Chad Jensen, representing the Utah Sheriffs Association, discussed higher education needs, barriers, and recommendations for the county jails. Inmates average 35-45 days in county jails, which is not long enough to complete programs without the longer-term state inmates. Currently 1,600 state inmates are housed at 20 different jails across the state. Programs at some jails include GED, cognitive training, trade work, and therapeutic treatment for substance abuse and sex offenders. Jails have partners that provide tablets and maintain those contracts with vendors separately from the prison. It costs \$6 per inmate for the tablet. (Ballard) It would be good for this council to look at those contracts for potential collaboration on affordability, consistency, and compatibility. USU trains inmates in horticulture through their greenhouse program. The council is interested in whether or not USU can provide this all across the state and sees value in the program.

(Arungwa) Last year USU experimented with providing a class at the San Juan County Jail without funding and found that it made a difference. There are resources for those who are interested. They would like to replicate this pilot in other jails. Our research shows that any type of higher education is better than nothing. We have also been working with Utah Tech to reach all juvenile prisons.

(McKell) The chairs would like a list of what is offered where across the state. (Haines) This was done for credentialed programs in the 2022 council report and can be updated. It does not include stand-alone courses.

(Ballard) USHE should request all of the line item budgets and house those. The priority needs to be on completion of certificates and degrees. Student access advisors are very important. If we had a list of everything offered, when someone gets moved their advisor can see what classes are equivalent and being offered in their new area so the inmate doesn't need to start over.

(Group Discussion) What is the best pathway for getting the right students in the right place? Leverage tech to eliminate the barrier of location. Use movement to create opportunity. We need to be intentional about new programs so students don't have to duplicate classes. If we can get them technical certificates that translate into an immediate job, it changes how the inmate sees themselves and society.

(Donaldson) Healthy Relationships Utah with USU is in every jail through the extensions. When a student moves, USU will track them down to complete the course. They are federally funding and looking at expanding and adding parenting courses. We also need to teach the inmates how to use the tablets as many have not used technology for quite some time. We may also want to train inmates to own and run their own business. UU is developing a bachelor degree that focuses on holistic approaches.

Action items for the next meeting:

- Compile an overall menu of current institution offerings.
- Develop recommendations for providing programs at the jails.
- Identify which institutions are using tablets, and explore the feasibility of tablets as a collaborative shared service between institutions.

5. **FY2025 Budget Recommendations for USHE**

This item was tabled pending discussions of current and potential funding structures.

6. **Recommendations for Potential Legislation**

Rep. Ballard has opened a bill file and highlighted changes she is considering from last year's House Bill 203.

(Council discussion) Many incarcerated students are currently handwriting papers. It would help if students could get a keyboard attachment for the tablets and internet accessibility for downloading and uploading. SLCC is currently providing laptops that are locked down specifically for incarcerated students. It is difficult providing the proper security and studying environment for work outside of the classroom. The co-chairs would like to see some examples of best practices in other states.

The prison does testing during orientation upon arrival to evaluate education level. A large percentage of the population need academic intervention, most do not have a high school diploma and struggle with basic literacy.

(McKell) We need to use our resources efficiently and effectively. Do we have too many options? We need to make sure we have good quality programs even if we need to narrow it down.

(Ballard) Can inmates be hired as mentors? How can we increase technology readiness before starting coursework? (Parrish) Computer literacy is being done through the tablets. More tablet technician support is coming.

((Nocella) See UtahReintegrationProgram.org. Prison education without a reintegration program isn't successful. It addresses socialization, cell phones, hygiene, conflict resolution, etc.

(Parrish) Current reentry programs make sure they have the documentation they need to be successful. One idea is to have someone from DWS on-site to work with the inmates. There is a barrier for reintegration programs in dealing with the hours of consultations and the hours of the half-way houses. The prison could use help and ideas from the council members.

UDC was asked to reach out to the co-chairs on how the council can be more collaborative and efficient.

7. **Public Comment**

(none)

Future Meetings

All meetings at USHE or virtual

- September 20, 3:00-5:00
- October 31, 1:00-3:00

8. **Adjourn**

Motion to adjourn 4:55